DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 272 413 SO 017 323

AUTHOR Scheirer, Elinor A.
TITLE A Model for Collaborative Ethnography in Schools from an International Perspective.
PUB DATE Apr 86
NOTE 33p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (67th, San Francisco, CA, April 16-20, 1986).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Information Analyses (070) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Comparative Education; Cooperative Programs; Cross Cultural Studies; Educational Anthropology; *Educational Cooperation; Educational Practices; Educational Research; *Ethnography; *International Education; Social Science Research; Sociology
IDENTIFIERS Collaborative Inquiry; Collaborative Research

ABSTRACT

The paper examines how collaboration might occur when research in comparative education employs ethnographic techniques. Following a brief review of the literature, a set of principles and a model for collaborative ethnography in school-based research are presented in order to provide direction for future research where the active involvement of those who live in the environment studied is desired. This process can illuminate educational concerns shared internationally. The model outlines the interactions among school staff members and researchers when they work together to understand fully the nature of educational events and practices. Several stages in the process suggest how the research relationships can develop over time in order to achieve this level of collaborative ethnography. The paper responds to several concerns raised by the issue, among them how any set of principles or models of collaborative ethnology in an international context could be applied to ethnographic efforts in other settings more typically faced by educational researchers. A five-page reference list is appended. (TRS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED272413

A MODEL FOR COLLABORATIVE ETHNOGRAPHY IN SCHOOLS FROM AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Elinor A. Scheirer
College of Education and Human Services
University of North Florida
Jacksonville, Florida 32216

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Elinor A. Scheirer

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

April, 1986

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, California, April 16-20, 1986.

SO017323

A MODEL FOR COLLABORATIVE ETHNOGRAPHY IN SCHOOLS FROM AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Elinor A. Scheirer
University of North Florida

Introduction

When one addresses a particular topic in a somewhat formal paper, one is at once struck by the problematic situation of presumption, on the one hand, in the attempt to reduce a complex topic to a few pages and of over-qualification, on the other hand, when acknowledging the limitations of what is to be presented. Bearing this in mind, the following paper will offer several perspectives on the theme of collaborative ethnography in schools with the intent of generating a model or framework within which such activity might take place. As such thinking in the field appears to be in its infancy, it is also assumed that these ideas will produce discussion from which greater insight will emerge.

I have also promised to address collaborative ethnography in schools within an international context. That the process of collaboration in ethnographic endeavors should differ substantially enough in an international context as opposed to one where all share the same national origin needs explanation. Ethnographic research has indeed traditionally occurred within an international frame of reference; since this approach has been used to study

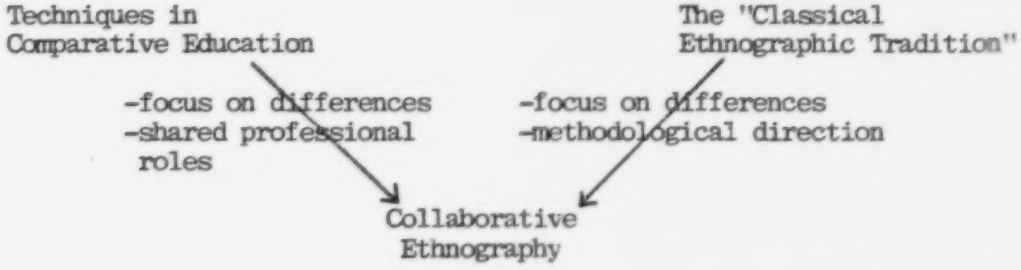
other cultures, it has often involved research by members of one nation within the borders of another. There has also been much research where members of one culture study another, clearly "different" culture within the same political boundaries; studies of American Indian life by "mainstream" American researchers serve as one such example. While definitions of culture may make distinctions between researcher and those studied less clear than I have implied, it seems that the assumption of difference may underlie, or may even motivate, such efforts at understanding. This perception of difference may also influence the study of certain groups within society by those outside the groups -- professional, as in Goffman's examination (1961) of medical students; non-assimilated, as in Whyte's Street Corner Society (1955); students, as in Cusik's Inside High School (1973).

However, there have also been attempts by educational researchers to understand their own collective experience in schools through studies of environments similar to what they may have confronted, as in Wolcott's study (1973) of the principalship, and through collaborative observation-participation approaches, as in Smith and Geoffrey's account (1968) of life in a sixth/seventh-grade urban classroom. Here difference between one's own experience and the events being studied seems not an operative concept; rather, the goal is greater insight into familiar phenomena. It is also in these studies that one can consider

the notion of collaboration in such educational research. While collaborative ethnography is indeed a subset of these ethnographic studies, the potential is clearly within them since roles and interests may be related and a basis for collaboration can be developed. Where collaboration has occurred, researchers have approached events from several perspectives while sharing common professional ties in order to understand more fully the events studied.

The issue of collaborative ethnography within an international context seems to combine some of the above dimensions in a novel way as indicated by the following diagram:

Sources of a Collaborative Ethnographic Approach in an International Context



The assumption of shared roles and interests and common professional ties operates along with the awareness of differences regarding their interpretation in practice. Thus, the underlying motivation for such work seems to involve a desire both to understand events more fully through professionals working together and, for the

researcher at least, to consider approaches to professional roles and practices which are different from what may have been previously known. As such, collaborative ethnography from an international perspective seeks to illuminate events in categories familiar to those confronted by the researcher in the home environment while also analyzing any major and subtle differences which may exist.

This line of thinking raises some interesting questions. Ethnographic collaboration as a construct implies that a research perspective exists unique from others in the field. Yet, one can ask how this collaboration differs from well-handled observation-participation approaches. Further, the international component in this ethnographic collaboration may just as easily be met by solid studies in comparative education. Another issue to be raised is how any set of principles or model of collaborative ethnography in an international context could be applied to ethnographic efforts in other settings more typically faced by educational researchers.

The remainder of this paper will attempt to respond to these concerns. A brief review of related literature from several areas will undertake to establish collaborative ethnography in an international context as a viable concept. Then, with the additional perspective provided by a long-term study involving ethnographic collaboration internationally, principles governing such work will be identified and a model proposed and discussed.

Roots of Collaborative Ethnography in Schools from an International Perspective

Clearly the international component of the proposed principles and model for collaborative ethnography draws upon the comparative tradition in education. The material included here is intended to represent that tradition and to remind us of the importance of that body of literature.

Educators have traditionally described several purposes for the comparative study of educational systems. For example, the analysis of educational practices from a cross-cultural perspective enables consideration of alternative solutions to problems similar to one's own; it permits educators to learn from the experiences of others so that quality of schooling can improve unimpeded; or, it can allow the researcher to explore and test theoretical propositions about teaching and learning within an international frame of reference (Trethewey, 1976, p. 2 & chap. 3). Beyond the possibility of selective borrowing of educational approaches from others in order to effect change and even reform, comparative education can also provide an opportunity to acquire insight into one's own educational system through the analysis of contrasts and similarities and thereby to develop more fully one's own ideas.

A comparative study of education as a means for analysis of one's own system seems particularly appropriate when one desires to reexamine educational practices already borrowed from others and

guiding behaviors at home. If one questions whether these practices have been carefully learned and implemented, then such comparative study may indeed bring about verification or correction, with concomitant depth of understanding. Further, such follow-up study of practices in the other system seems particularly necessary since it would be "most disconcerting to consider seriously following someone else's example only to find that he is himself considering abandoning the exemplary practice" (Johnson, 1974, p. 14).

Comparative education, then, can meet certain critical needs in education. However, the methodology used in such endeavors reflects many orientations. As Holmes (1981) discusses method in comparative education, he makes two general points of relevance to any consideration of the role ethnography might take in this field.

First, Holmes describes carefully the function of comparative education as a means to illuminate national problems in comparative perspective. He acknowledges that for him the Dewey-inspired problem-solving approach became the most effective way of doing research in comparative education. Particularly, he notes that scientific inquiry begins with pure or practical problems which generate interest in certain kinds of data; the view of education as a means to solve economic and social problems leads the comparative educational researcher to such a problem-solving approach. Thus, Holmes describes how the purpose for or focus of comparative

educational research governs the selection of the specific research methodology used; conversely, such research may also assist in the reform of education and perform a social function. Therefore, comparative education is not typically pursued purely as an academic endeavor, and any use of ethnography here would also reflect an applied character.

Secondly, Holmes describes the phenomenon of "cultural borrowing" as "misconceived comparative education." The study of other systems of education is often selective and driven by a desire either to inform choices during efforts at educational reform or to encourage colleagues to improve their approaches because of unfavorable comparisons. Many examples exist to substantiate the prevalence of this version of work in comparative education. Holmes' observation that historically such reports have lacked "any conscious desire to collect comparable observed data and to classify them or indeed to discuss the problems of classifying educational data" (p. 21) implies that a rigorous methodology such as ethnography which exemplifies these procedures may be needed.

Moreover, Holmes notes Sadler's belief that educators cannot imitate only a portion of another system if the objective is to reproduce the spirit of that system; he also cites Harris' view that thorough analysis is necessary before comparisons can be made among systems. One can argue that such a concern for the

whole can, in turn, lead to a valuing of ethnographic work which is uniquely able to clarify that whole. Thus, ethnography may inform cultural borrowing which, as Holmes states, must rest on an understanding of what can and cannot be borrowed and how the process can be both theoretically justified and made feasible.

An obvious second theme inherent in the concept of collaborative ethnography in an international context is the nature of collaboration. Increasingly collaboration appears to be receiving attention in the literature; the most recent issue of Educational Leadership, for example, even has as its subtitle, "Collaboration for Change."

Nord (1986) expands on her earlier differentiation (1981) between cooperation and collaboration. The 1981 focus is upon a model of institution-level relationships which fall into the category of cooperation or that of collaboration. Key elements for successful collaboration include mutual need for and expected benefit from the effort by all involved, clear understanding of the expectations, and sharing of goals, communication, resources, control, and rewards. Out of the 1986 review of the literature, Nord also emphasizes the need for collaboration to arise from shared interests and needs, to include a sense of mutual gain, and to value the perceptions of all.

Lieberman's description (1986) of collaborative research activity involving teachers and college people stresses the value of such work in both adding to knowledge and providing for

professional development through reflection and action upon identified problems. She notes that this approach has the potential to narrow the research-practice gap and to establish teachers as colleagues who feel empowered due to their attacking of the complex problems of the classroom. Nelson (1986) also emphasizes how collaboration can foster collegueship and thus serve to support teachers; her definition focuses on the development of collegueship among teachers and other professionals with shared intellectual interests in a given geographical area.

Cooper (1982) links collaboration with a process for improving college teaching. Naturalistic inquiry methods along with a consultation strategy are used in a faculty-development process. Gardner (1981) also underscores the potential for using ethnographic observation as a means to provide feedback to teachers in clinical settings. Her tone seems to suggest that an application of ethnography would be to help teachers improve their effectiveness and address identified problems.

Gibson (1982) further extends the notion of professionals working together to effect change in her argument for using the results of applied ethnographic research to bring about improvement in educational practice. Through a collaborative model at the institutional level the researcher could assist school people in making use of the findings resulting from ethnographic study in a given environment.

This desire, of course, may not be far removed from the classical concern that the researcher share the ethnographic analysis with the people involved in the study. Yet, the comparative educational tradition may remind us that the purpose for this involvement may not be primarily to make changes at home or elsewhere, but, rather, as Dyrneson and Bastien (1975) express it, to exchange meaning between people and then to compare findings with similar and different environments throughout the world. This comparative perspective fosters an in-depth and balanced view of the meaning of events as ascribed by both the researchers and participants in a study.

Collaboration does appear to be a recurring thread in the literature on ethnography -- after all, the method does become intensely personal and intimate with the researcher and school people living significant portions of their lives together -- but the construct seems variously interpreted with some contraditions even emerging from time to time. Smith's discussion (1982) seems to carry the meaning of what can be experienced as collaboration. He remarks, "Words like democratic, bureaucratic, autocratic, aesthetic keep arising . . . These abstractions pale when I think of the particulars in the long term relationship Pat and I have had" (p. 13).

For Smith, collaboration becomes a significant issue in the research undertaken. He urges educators to reflect on several

aspects of their work in ethnography, one of which is the place of professional collaboration and relationships in the research lives they wish to follow. Ethnography provides a context in which relationships — professional and personal — can develop, where friendships emerge, where people "keep each other honest" across their professional roles, and in which colleagues share ideas and provide assistance as their specific competencies allow. Of course, collaboration becomes more obvious in specific task accomplishment such as writing together and providing each other with feedback on ideas used to describe and explain phenomena observed/experienced. But the qualitative issue seems nonetheless paramount here.

The Smith and Geoffrey study (1968) serves as a significant example of what such collaboration can generate. The descriptions and insights span both the concern for understanding teaching and the desire to reflect on the process of researcher and teacher working closely together in an atmosphere of genuine colleagueship. Similarly, Florio and Walsh (1976) report on their colleagueship in classroom research and offer direction to ethnographic methodology which seeks to be collaborative.

Florio and Walsh experienced an evolution in their methodology. They moved from an initial insider-outsider dichotomy to a relationship in which roles blended, with the researcher becoming more immersed in the classroom and the teacher becoming more observant and reflective;

both participants, in a sense, demonstrated a double stance of involvement and disciplined reflection. A process of joint discovery emerged which addressed daily classroom concerns and included both teacher and researcher posing researchable questions, formulating hypotheses, and gathering and analyzing data. Here the ethnographic and collaborative approach to research seems to provide benefit for all involved and establishes a means for professional growth and connectedness.

Morin (1985) describes a "anthropopedagogical" model employing ethnographic tools and a concern for action research in which an educator functions as a change agent. He sees this as transcending applied research and emphasizing participation and context. Guidelines promoting greater participation in this view of action research include use of negotiation leading to commitment, a shared quest for meaning, an open contract which encourages on-going communication and modification, and valuing of both theory and practice as ways of knowing.

Certain uses of ethnographic monitoring provide yet another conceptualization of how collaboration might occur in ethnographic research. Erickson (1977) notes that "a focus on issues of value to those affected by and involved in the research [can] make possible humane and genuinely collaborative relationships between the researcher and the practitioner" (p. 63); these issues are then monitored in systematic, focused observation. Carrasco (1979) demonstrates how a

detailed case study can promote close and sympathetic collaboration among the researcher, the classroom teacher, and classroom aides through the use of ethnographic monitoring designed to expand teacher awareness.

Smith (1981a, 1981b) describes a collaborative project which involved ethnographic monitoring of children's acquisition of language arts skills. A team of researchers worked with teachers in a model which fostered egalitarian relationships and open communication to facilitate broad ownership of the research process and thus greater potential for using research results. The teachers were more than informants here since the unique contributions offered by their roles were included in the research design; they were participant-observers, as well, who reflected on classroom events with researchers as colleagues.

At the base of any kind of collaborative ethnography is a concern for ethics and a sense of responsibility to those involved in the study. Even though difficult to define, such effort seems to stress complete communication among all parties, with the researcher remaining in control while fostering interaction and input from the many participants (deVoss, Zimpher, & Nott, 1982).

Thus, it becomes clear that collaborative ethnography is an extremely complex, demanding, and delicate process, but one which can yield a rich understanding of life in schools because of the contributions from equal multiple perspectives. Where research involves work across professional roles or where questions necessitate

investigations across cultures or national boundaries, collaborative ethnography can be effective while maintaining deep respect and maximizing insight.

The Background Study

The principles and model which will be presented find their context in an ethnographic study of English informal education (See Scheirer, 1983, for a detailed description of the early years of the research.). The on-going research began with an initial six-month observation-participation study in one state-supported English middle school which is identified by English educators as a positive example of the implementation of informal educational approaches. Several basic questions regarding informal education as practiced in this setting guided the research. Over a subsequent period of six years, follow-up research has examined more specific concerns in greater depth, along with serving to maintain contact with the school's constant evolution and to "reground" continuing analyses within their appropriate context.

The study arose out of interest in issues associated with informal-open education and its application in American schools. Of concern were the nature of informal-open education, practices typically found in schools identified as informal or open, the origins of informal-open educational principles within the cultural milieu, and outcomes of such educational approaches (For discussion of these points see, for example, Eisner, 1973; Fisher, 1972; Marsh, 1970; Rathbone, 1971;

Rogers, 1970.).

Efforts to transplant practices from English schools which have successfully used them to schools in the United States reflect both the selective cultural borrowing and the comparative argument about which Holmes (1981) speaks. In order to overcome the limitations of these approaches and to address questions posed by the less-than-successful attempts at implementing informal-open education in many American settings, the study sought to clarify the practices evident in an English informal school and to identify the cultural conditions which seem necessary for those practices to be successful.

The observation-participation study and the follow-up research have involved a state-supported middle school located in a middle-income to lower-middle-income industrial community in the Doncaster Metropolitan Education Authority in South Yorkshire, England. Approximately one hundred eighty to two hundred sixty students from eight to twelve years of age have attended the school in any given year. The staff has variously included six to nine full-time teachers, one or two part-time teachers, one head teacher, a school secretary/non-teaching assistant, and several visiting teachers in specialized content areas.

The methodology of the study has encompassed traditional ethnographic and observation-participation techniques (See, for example, McCall & Simmons, 1969; Spradley, 1979, 1980.). However, in an examination of educational practices in order to clarify issues

of concern with regard to adoption elsewhere, one is immediately involved in an applied ethnography of schooling with all of its challenges to objectivity (See Noblit, 1984, for a discussion of this dilemma.).

The data have included direct observations of teacher and student behaviors over a wide range of educational activities, discussions with school staff members, and the content of relevant educational documents. These have been summarized and catalogued to produce descriptions both of individual educational events and of the daily school routine. The data have also been analyzed in order to produce interpretations regarding how informal education works and how teachers and students make sense of their experience.

There has also been concern with the evolution of the research process itself over the six-year period. The role of the researcher in the study is, of course, critical -- in selecting questions, in entering the field environment, in relating to the people and events within the environment. Here a subset of the school observations and discussions becomes relevant as it reflects the behaviors and interpretations of the researcher and staff members toward each other, toward the environment, and toward the research endeavor. These interactions have evolved over the years. Analysis of the interactions yields a set of principles and a model of the nature of collaboration based on experience in one setting where the researcher and school staff members have dialogued over a long period of time about shared

experiences and shared concerns. While not all dimensions implied by the principles and the model have been evident in this particular research effort, in-depth analysis of this experience has led to a broader consideration of relevant factors.

Some Principles for Collaborative Ethnography From an International Perspective

Based on an analysis of literature relevant to the concept of collaborative ethnography and reflection on the experience of long-term work in one setting, there seem to be several principles operating when collaboration occurs. While each principle which follows stresses a particular point, it is also clear that the concerns addressed overlap considerably; therefore, it seems useful to examine them as a package.

1) Participants should share a commitment to the same broad professional goals and share a belief in the importance of the learning of students in schools. That is, there is an assumption of collegiality among the participants in the sense that all are seen to be working toward the same goals, even though from differing perspectives. This collegiality provides a basis for collaboration and a motivation for collaboration.

2) Relationships between school people and the researcher should be permitted to evolve in order to allow all to become naturally comfortable in working together in ways congruent with their respective roles and their professional and national identities.

3) The collaborators should have a shared interest in the research undertaking; they should share a curiosity about the research focus and believe it is worth the effort and deserving of being understood at greater depths. Thus, they share a notion of purpose as a driving force for the research. Moreover, their separate professional goals which also operate should be congruent with no danger of political strife or conflict occurring.

4) Periodically, there should be "checks" on perceptions and the ways in which the project is developing to determine if the needs of all are being met.

5) The participants should have shared opportunities to influence the design of the research before a particular phase of the research occurs; mutual ownership of the process will more likely occur even though the participants will not exercise equal responsibility since their professional roles do differ.

6) The collaboration is exhibited at the personal level of researcher and practitioners and does not occur only at the institutional level with the researcher then carrying out others' decisions. Nor does institutional collaboration even need to occur except as it might be necessary for immediate supervisors to support participants in their collaborative efforts.

7) Both the ethnographer and the practitioners are involved in the research primarily for the purposes of understanding what occurs in the educational environments and only secondarily for

the purposes of improving educational experiences. Here improvement is a matter of growth along an already established path and not a form of bringing about educational change. The product sought, then, is perceived by both as greater understanding of the meaning of certain experiences in schools, in contrast to a set of finite findings to be disseminated to others.

The perceptual differences reflected in these two approaches -- understanding and improvement on the one hand and change on the other hand -- while perhaps subtle, are crucial to the quality of working together which can occur; that is, the research is perceived to be a way to make even better that which already has merit and not a way for outsiders to evaluate practice and then possibly to impose methods with the intent of "fostering educational change." Thus, the consumers of the fruits of the ethnographic endeavor are the collaborators themselves and the profession as a whole rather than an elite group of outsiders to the focus of the study.

8) Commitment to the research and to the accompanying relationships occurs over a significant period of time, not only initially during a formal intensive study, but afterwards as follow-up analyses occur, spin-off studies are identified, and more general educational issues are examined. This process solidifies the relationships, affirms the commitments of the participants to the educational questions involved, and

counteracts professional isolation.

A Model for Collaborative Ethnography in Schools

The above principles and the nature of ethnography per se suggest the many variables which operate when one examines the concept of collaborative ethnography within an international perspective. The model on page 21 presents these variables in relation to each other.

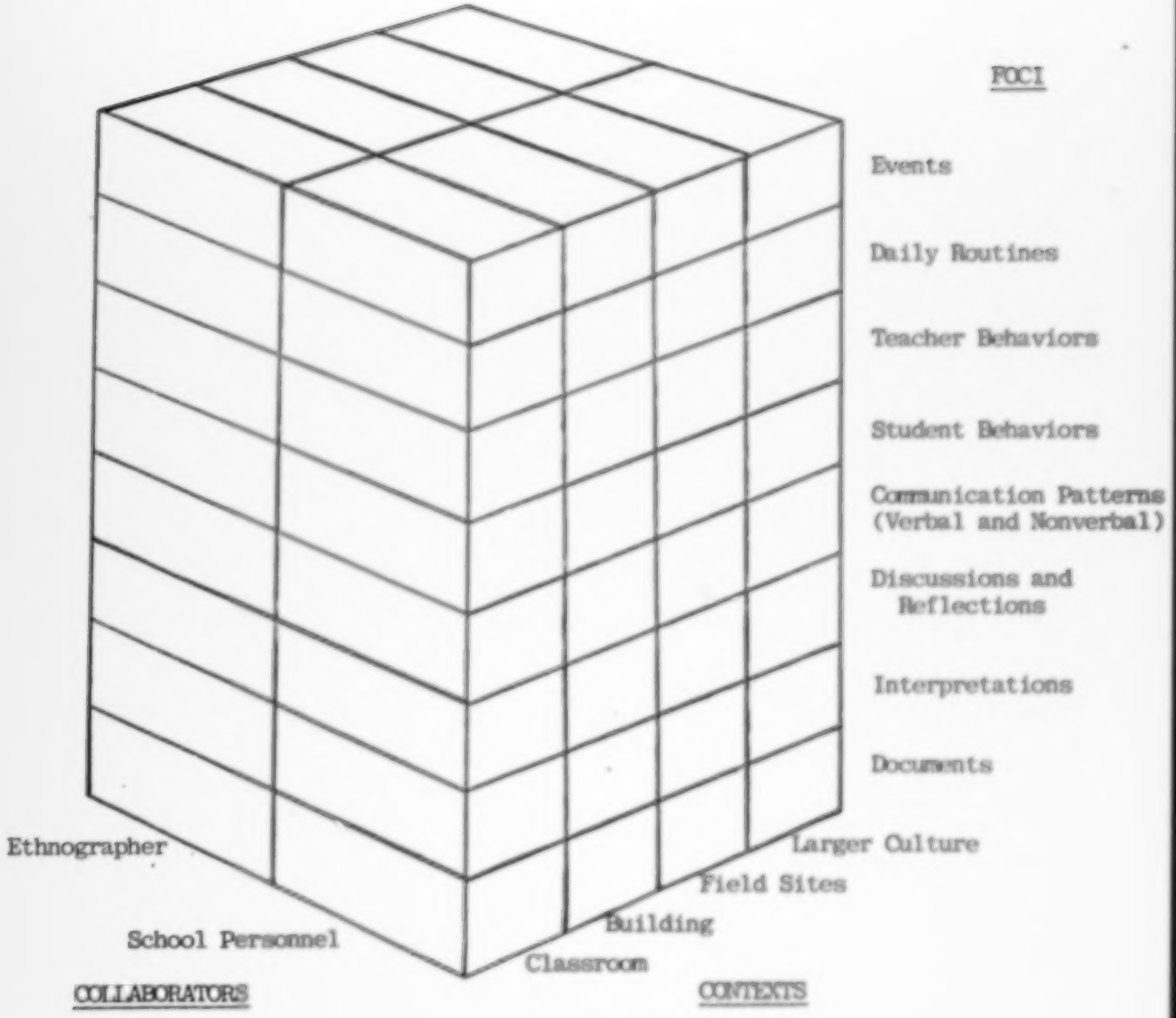
Of particular interest in this model are the complementary roles of ethnographer and school personnel when working in collaborative research. The following chart may help to differentiate them within the perspective of a cohesive team:

Roles in Collaborative Ethnography

Ethnographer	School Personnel
(Purpose: to see "what is" and to identify what is different)	(Purpose: to understand more fully)
Planner	Planner
Observer	Actor
Recorder	Analyzer, Interpreter, Synthesizer — in terms of own experience
Analyzer, Interpreter, Synthesizer — in terms of generic educational practices	Reflector on own behavior
Comparer to other forms of generic educational practices observed	

It also seems appropriate to posit that there might be certain stages in this collaboration over time. Inasmuch as collaboration seems to evolve as participants learn how to work together and learn

A MODEL FOR COLLABORATIVE
ETHNOGRAPHY IN SCHOOLS



what is involved in the experience, stages may be inevitable. One such display of these stages follows:

"Stages" Within the Process of

Collaborative Ethnography*

I

Desire to understand what goes on in schools ("Felt need")

II

Mutual selection to work together (agreements which are modified as the work proceeds)

III

Shared experiences or data gathering (intentional and unplanned)

IV

Interpretation of and reflection upon data and application to school phenomena in general

V

Collaborative theory development

*This draft scheme also relates to a proposal offered in a paper delivered by Scheirer (1985), "Toward Collaborative Theorizing: Thinking Alongside the Teacher."

Collaboration might also occur best at only certain points in the ethnographic process. And, at any given moment in time, several different levels of interaction may exist with different members on a school staff: from social support for the research; to participation in certain research activities; to mild interest and curiosity in the study's focus; to reaction to ideas, hypotheses, and interpretations; to intense collaboration in collecting data, analyzing them, and reflecting on both the process itself and the meanings uncovered.

A few comments seem relevant regarding the relationship of these principles and model to the background study described earlier. Collaboration was not an initial objective in that ethnographic work; rather, it seems to be evolving as relationships develop and more opportunities for collegial reflection are pursued. Fortunately, the researcher has never been seen as a potential evaluator which has relieved the study of the pressures and conflicts associated with the insecurity and distrust accompanying evaluation; instead, the school staff consistently emit a self-confidence in their teaching and commitment to professional growth which arise both from their school being viewed by other educators in England as exemplary and from their own level of competence. And, perhaps because of their intellectual interests, the staff members have been from the beginning more than informants -- offering interpretations of events, reacting to the researcher's ideas and comments readily and openly, being thoughtful about what has happened and about discussions of meaning long after initial talk has ceased, and frequently asking for statements of

research "findings." Indeed, it has often seemed that school personnel have pushed toward ethnographic collaboration at least as much as the researcher has.

Implications

This paper has examined how collaboration might occur when research in comparative education employs ethnographic techniques. A set of principles and a model for collaborative ethnography in school-based research are presented in order to provide direction for future research where the active involvement of those who live in the environment studied is desired; this process can thereby illuminate educational concerns shared across national boundaries. The model outlines the interactions among school staff members and researchers when they work together to understand fully the nature of educational events and practices. Several stages in this process suggest how the research relationships can develop over time in order to achieve this level of collaborative ethnography.

In studies which focus upon school practices from the perspective of comparative education, the collaboration possible may be even more critical to obtaining full understanding of the environment, of the behaviors of teachers and students, of how they construct meaning of their experience, and of how the cultural context supports the school setting. Perceptive cross-cultural study will not rely exclusively upon the researcher for careful description, analysis, and interpretation since the school staff also participates; they can help direct efforts, especially when differences may be such that the

researcher cannot discern them alone due to the inevitable restrictions of a single perspective which is not part of the environment.

However, the principles and model for collaborative ethnography presented here do not seem restricted to studies within an international context. As with any type of research, the task of generalizing approaches to other situations must be handled carefully. Yet, it would seem that if a conceptualization of collaborative ethnography can make sense within the complexities of work in comparative education, it could prove useful as well in settings which do not differ as obviously from those previously experienced by the researcher. The benefit to thorough description and analysis offered by the multiple perspectives of collaboration would be as welcome in these types of studies as in those involving substantially different views of education.

It is assumed, therefore, that such a model of collaborative ethnography can be useful when researchers work in schools since the multiple perspectives provided may likely produce greater accuracy in the description and analysis of the setting studied. When the research questions are particularly complex or sensitive, these multiple perspectives may be even more important to the validity of the results.

The broadened participation in the research process also makes possible shared ownership of the results. Such ethnographic research endeavors are clearly non-elitist since those involved have input into data description and analysis. Moreover, the involvement of

school staff members may also facilitate the bridging of the often perceived gap between research and practice and between researchers and practitioners.

The collaboration possible under this model facilitates increased understanding of how and why certain schools function as they do. As the profession seeks to improve teaching and learning, such understanding is critical both to assess where we are and to determine where we might go.

And, even more insight might come as the principles and the model itself are modified through the processes of scrutiny and analysis, and the taking of many things into account (Anderson-Levitt, 1984). In this way the profession might avoid the trap Schwab (1969) fears of evading fundamental issues through the construction of models for their own sake.

References

Anderson-Levitt, K.M. (1984). On taking everything into account. Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 15, 316-319.

Carrasco, R. L. (1979). Expanded awareness of student performance: A case study in applied ethnographic monitoring in a bilingual classroom. Sociolinguistic working paper number 60. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Lab. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 250 933)

Cooper, C. R. (1982). Getting inside the instructional process: A collaborative diagnostic process for improving college teaching. Journal of Instructional Development, 5 (3), 2-10.

Cusik, P. A. (1973). Inside high school: The student's world. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

deVoss, G. G., Zimpher, N., & Nott, D. (1982). Ethics in field work research: A case study. Urban Review, 14, 35-46.

Dynneson, T. L., & Bastien, J. (1975, May). An ethnographic model for researching the public schools. Paper presented at the Western Social Science Association Meeting, Denver, CO. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 110 363)

Eisner, E. W. (1973). English primary schools: Some observations and assessments. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University.

Erickson, F. (1977). Some approaches to inquiry in school-community ethnography. Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 8 (2), 58-69.

Fisher, R. J. (1972). Learning how to learn: The English primary school and American education. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Florio, S., & Walsh, M. (1976, April). The teacher as colleague in classroom research. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. Ed 124 557)

Gardner, C. H. (1981, April). Friendly strangers: Reducing teacher isolation through ethnographic observation. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Reading Association, New Orleans, LA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 205 487)

Gibson, M. A. (1982, December). Effecting educational change through ethnographic research. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington, DC. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 225 924)

Goffman, E. (1961). The boys in white. New York: William C. Brown.

Holmes, B. (1981). Comparative education: Some considerations of method. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Hord, S. M. (1981). Working together: Cooperation or collaboration? (Report No. R & D - 3123). Austin, TX: The University of Texas, Research and Development Center for Teacher Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 226 450)

Hord, S. M. (1986). A synthesis of research on organizational collaboration. Educational Leadership, 43 (5), 22-26.

Johnson, M. (1974). Bases for comparing approaches to curriculum development. In P. H. Taylor & M. Johnson (Eds.), Curriculum development: A comparative study (pp. 7-15). Windsor, Berkshire, England: NFER Publishing Co.

Lieberman, A. (1986). Collaborative research: Working with, not working on . . . Educational Leadership, 43 (5), 28-32.

Marsh, L. (1970). Alongside the child in the primary school. London: A. & C. Black.

McCall, G. J., & Simmons, J. L. (1969). Issues in participant observation: A text and reader. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Morin, A. (1985, January). New trends for new needs in instructional technology theory and development. Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, Anaheim, CA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 256 327)

Nelson, B. S. (1986). Collaboration for colleagueship: A program in support of teachers. Educational Leadership, 43 (5), 50-52.

Noblit, G. W. (1984). The prospects of an applied ethnography for education: A sociology of knowledge interpretation. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 6 (1), 95-101.

Rathbone, C. H. (Ed.). (1971). Open education: The informal classroom. New York: Citation Press.

Rogers, V. R. (1970). Teaching in the British primary school. London: Collier-Macmillan.

Scheirer, E. A. (1983, April). Ethnography, comparative education, and the classroom: Some lessons from English informal education. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada.

Scheirer, E. A. (1985, October). Toward collaborative theorizing: Thinking alongside the teacher. Paper presented at the Seventh Conference on Curriculum Theory and Classroom Practice, Dayton, OH.

Schwab, J. J. (1969). The practical: A language for curriculum. School Review, 78, 1-23.

Smith, D. M. (1981a). Ethnographic monitoring: A way to understanding by those who are making schooling work. The Generator, 12 (2), 69-92.

Smith, D. M. (1981b). Ethnographic monitoring of children's acquisition of reading/language arts skills in and out of the classroom: General findings. The Generator, 12 (2), 37-68.

Smith, L. M. (1982, March). Teaching tales and theories: An ethnographic next step? Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 225 227)

Smith, L. M., & Geoffrey, W. (1968). The complexities of an urban classroom: An analysis toward a general theory of teaching. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Spradley, J. P. (1979). The ethnographic interview. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Spradley, J. P. (1980). Participant observation. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Trethewey, A. R. (1976). Introducting comparative education. Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press.

Whyte, W. F. (1955). Street corner society (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wolcott, H. (1973). The man in the principal's office. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.